



Marc Elrich
County Executive



Darren M. Popkin
Sheriff

Office of the Sheriff
Domestic Violence Coordinating Council
Thursday, July 9, 2020
5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
Via Microsoft Teams due to the COVID-19 Crisis

Minutes

Attendees: Debbie Feinstein, Chair (Montgomery County Office of the State's Attorney); Tom Manion, Vice Chair (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff); Teresa Bennett (Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services); Spencer Cantrell (Jewish Coalition Against Domestic Abuse); Nicole Drew (Montgomery County Commission for Women); Laurie Duker (Court Watch Montgomery); The Honorable Karen Ferretti (District Court for Montgomery County); Ingrid Gonzalez (Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services – Parole and Probation); The Honorable Sidney Katz (Montgomery County Council); Tina Michaels (Montgomery County Department of Correction and Rehabilitation – Pre-trial Services); The Honorable Karla Smith (Circuit Court for Montgomery County); Assistant Chief Ron Smith (Montgomery County Department of Police); The Honorable Rebecca Smondrowski (Montgomery County Public School – Board of Education); Lilah Katz (Student Member); Amy Palumbo (Community Member); Izola Shaw (Community Member); Ronald Whalen (Community Member); Smita Varia, Staff (Montgomery County Office of the Sheriff);

Guests: Lisa Mandel Trupp (Office of Montgomery County Councilmember Sidney Katz); Captain Amy Daum (Montgomery County Police Department); Shinyoung Park (Korean Community Service Center); Elaine Arndt (Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America); April Marrone, Leah Schwartz, and Kathryn Pontzer (The Victim Services Advisory Board)

Absent: Eshigo Okasili (Community Member); Mindy Thiel (Community Member);

I. Welcome and Introductions

II. Guidelines for the Virtual Meeting

Due to the COVID-19 health crisis, the meeting was conducted virtually using Microsoft Teams. Debbie Feinstein reviewed guidelines for participants. She asked everyone to mute microphones when not speaking. Debbie Feinstein asked the participants to use the chat function if they would like to speak. She also requested that participants should identify themselves each time they speak.

III. Approval of May Minutes

The May 14, 2020 DVCC meeting minutes were reviewed. Sidney Katz proposed a motion to approve the minutes without revision. The motion was seconded by Laurie Duker and passed.

IV. Membership Update

Eshigo Okasili and Lilah Katz's DVCC terms are have ended as of the end of June. The DVCC would like to thank Eshigo Okasili for her 6 year commitment with the DVCC.

Lilah Katz has been on the DVCC for 2 years and has been a great voice for the needs of high school students.

Zola Shaw is also stepping down from the DVCC. She is going to pursue an opportunity to advance racial equity in Montgomery County.

Teresa Bennett is leaving County Service at the end of this month. The DVCC would like to thank her for her years of commitment on the DVCC as well.

Assistant Chief Ron Smith has formally been approved to represent the Montgomery County Police Department for the DVCC.

Applications are open right now for a Student member, a lawyer and a survivor. The Deadline is July 17th.

V. Announcements

Debbie Feinstein announced that Smita Varia has now become a trainer for the Professional Beauty Association to facilitate their CUT IT OUT training for employees at salons and spas to learn how to recognize signs of domestic violence and how to help.

Victim Services Advisory Board Members Leah Schwartz, Juanita Rogers, April Marrone, and Kathryn Pontzer shared some of their Board priorities that address domestic violence issues. They include resolving housing issues for domestic violence victims and their families, increasing funding for domestic violence offender programs and increasing the number of VASAP Victim Assistants for the courtroom accompaniment. Tina Michaels and Tom Manion responded that their subcommittees (Offender Program and Policy and Victim Services) would like to work with the Victim Services Advisory Board on these initiatives.

VI. Committee Reports

- **Victim Services Committee update - Tom Manion, Chair**
Tom Manion reported that the Victim Services Committee met in June. Many of the initiatives are on hold right now because of the COVID-19 pandemic. He did announce that the committee is going to be working on a new project compiling a list of all domestic violence services available in Montgomery County. This project will include organizations and agencies, services offered, where referrals are made, and the entry points from where community members interact with them. This information will help identify gaps and inform future initiatives.
- **Education and Outreach Committee - Debbie Feinstein, Chair**
Debbie Feinstein announced that the Family Violence Prevention Campaign continues. Smita Varia mentioned that over 86,000 cards have been distributed through food distribution drives, restaurants and other community events. Debbie Feinstein said that the RespectFest Committee is meeting in a few weeks to talk about the plans for 2020-2021.

- **Legislative and Policy Planning Committee – Spencer Cantrell, Chair**
Spencer Cantrell said that the Legislative and Policy Planning Committee will schedule a meeting in the next month to talk about priorities for the upcoming legislative session.
- **Offender Program and Policy Committee – Tina Michaels, Chair**
Tina Michaels announced that she has been transferred from Pre-Trial Services to the Detention Center. The Offender Program and Policy Committee met in June.

The number of people on Pre-trial has increased by 33% and the cases are much more serious. More people are falling out of compliance because they are on pretrial longer than expected due to courts being closed, and the offenders have difficulty with the strict conditions for this extended period of time. In addition, since there are not in person appointments and limited outside referral sources, the case workers cannot refer the offenders to helpful programs. They are reporting to the courts on the dangerous offenders. They were previously being more careful with filing warrants for those that were violating pre-trial, because the police were not acting as quickly because of the pandemic. If the offender sees their status change in Case Search and know there is a warrant out for their arrest, then they cut off their GPS and Pre-Trial can't track their movement or determine that they are entering exclusion zones. The police are now back to normal response.

Tina Michaels also mentioned that defendants are still having their protective order hearings, but not criminal hearings. It has been observed that Judges sometimes alter the stay away provisions in the protective order to allow contact or even to return to home addresses, which contradicts the criminal stay away conditions. Defendants do not understand the separate tracks. It is even more confusing because criminal stay away conditions can be set by a commissioner and civil protective orders are set by a judge. Judge Ferretti is trying to reiterate this with her cases, and they have created an internal form for judges to use to clarify these differences.

Teresa Bennett announced that the new contractor for the Abuser Intervention Program is going through final negotiations. Ingrid Gonzalez said that Parole will start to see people starting next week.

VII. Adjournment

Debbie Feinstein adjourned the meeting at 6:10pm

The next DVCC meeting will be on September 10, 2020, 5pm-7pm at the Family Justice Center



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